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ARMANI, WHO BUILT $10 BILLION GLOBAL FASHION EMPIRE, DIES

Italian designer Giorgio Armani, one of the most iconic names in the contemporary fashion, died at his home on Thursday at the age of 91

A FAVOURITE OF MANY HOLLYWOOD A-LISTERS

Armani's fashion empire spanned clothing, accessories, perfumes, home furnishings, cosmetics, books, chocolates, and more. His designs graced over 200 films and became a red carpet staple, dressing stars like Anne Hathaway, Brad Pitt, George Clooney, and Jodie Foster. Recently, his health made headlines after he missed Milan Fashion Week in June

HIS DESIGNS REDEFINED ELEGANCE

- In 1975, Armani and his partner Sergio Galeotti sold their car for $10,000 to launch their own menswear ready-to-wear label
- The first breakthrough came in the late 1970s with the creation of the liningless sports jacket, embodying his vision of relaxed, understated elegance. It was an immediate success in the West | P15

50
YEARS SINCE ARMANI FOUNDED HIS FASHION EMPIRE

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NIRF RANKING

IIT Madras retains top slot overall, IISc comes in 2nd

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

THE Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras has retained the top slot in the overall category of rankings in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2025 for the seventh straight year. At the second and third positions in the 'overall' rankings are IISc Bengaluru and IIT Bombay. IIT Delhi has secured the fourth position. The rankings, released by Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Thursday, ranked IIT Madras as the best in engineering, innovation, and the newly introduced sustainable development goals categories.

Among universities, IISc Bengaluru bagged the top spot, while the Jawaharlal Nehru University and Manipal Academy of Higher Education secured the second and the third positions, respectively. Karnataka-based Manipal Academy of Higher Education is also the first private institution to feature in the top three of the NIRF rankings.

The National Law School of India University, Bengaluru, has been ranked the best law college in India. The National Law University, Delhi, and NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad, have retained the second and third spots, respectively. In the management institution category, IIM Ahmedabad has come on top, while IIM Bangalore has been ranked the second best.

The best institution for medical education, according to the ranking, is AIIMS Delhi.

WITH THIS ISSUE
CHENNAI'S BEST WEEKEND GUIDE INDULGE
44 PAGES, INCLUDING 24 OF INDULGE (TABLOID)

Peace deal done with Kuki-Zos

After over 2 years, NH-2 to be opened for the free movement of commuters and essential goods

TERMS OF AGREEMENT
The Kuki National Organisation and United People's Front agreed to
1 Relocate 7 designated camps away from areas vulnerable to conflict
2 Reduce the number of designated camps
3 Relocate the weapons with nearest CRPF/BSF camps
4 Stringent physical verification of cadres by security forces to de-list foreign nationals, if any

MUKESH RANJAN @ New Delhi

IN a major breakthrough ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's proposed visit to Manipur, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Thursday arrived at an agreement with the Kuki-Zo insurgent groups to renew the Suspension of Operations (SoO). It also persuaded them to open National Highway-2 that was blocked for Meitei people for the last two years since the ethnic clashes broke out in the state on May 3, 2023.

PM's Manipur visit

In an official statement, the government said the decisions came after a series of meetings between officials of the MHA and a delegation of the Kuki-Zo Council (KZC) over the past few days here. Kuki National Organisation (KNO) spokesperson Seilen Haokip confirmed to media persons that the agreement had been signed.

Over the last two years, the MHA had been regularly holding talks with Kuki-Zo insurgent groups to renegotiate the terms and conditions of the SoO.

As per the tripartite SoO agreement signed by the Centre, Manipur government and Kuki-Zo groups on Thursday, the territorial integrity of Manipur will be maintained. "The parties under the pact agree for relocation of 7 designated camps of militants away from areas vulnerable to conflict in Manipur and also agree for a negotiated solution to bring lasting peace, stability to Manipur," the Union home ministry said.

The Kuki-Zo Council decided to open National Highway-2, which passes through Manipur, for free movement of commuters, essential goods, the statement said, adding the Council has committed to cooperate with security forces to maintain peace along the National Highway.

A Joint Monitoring Group will henceforth closely monitor enforcement of ground rules, the statement said, adding violations will be dealt with firmly, including review of the SoO pact.

The Kuki-Zo council, an umbrella group of Kuki-Zo groups, is yet to issue a formal statement.

Since May 3, 2023, after ethnic clashes broke out, the state has been divided on ethnic lines with Meiteis restricted to the valley districts and Kuki-Zo people in the hills.

The first tripartite SoO agreement was signed in August 2008 and renewed every year till February 28, 2024, when the renewal was kept in abeyance following allegations that the insurgent group was indulging in ethnic clashes and providing training to village defence volunteers, a charge the groups denied.

While former chief minister Biren Singh and his MLAs wanted the SoO agreement cancelled, Kuki-Zo groups and their legislators requested the Centre to renew the pact.

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UNSAFE FOOTPATHS

ENGINEERS SAY ONLY 8% SAFE TO WALK

As per data with the GBA engineering section, around 280 km of the 3,500-km footpath network in the city is in good condition putting serious question on safe pedestrian mobility | P2

K'TAKA WANTS SEC TO SWITCH TO BALLOT PAPERS FOR LOCAL BODY POLLS

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI
@ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka cabinet on Thursday decided to recommend to the State Election Commission to revise the voters' list and hold all upcoming local bodies' polls in Karnataka, including the five corporations under Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), using ballot papers instead of EVMs.

The Congress government's decision comes soon after Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi concluded his 16-day 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' in poll-bound Bihar. On August 8, Rahul had held a protest against the Centre and ECI in Bengaluru, alleging 'vote theft' in Bengaluru Central LS constituency. It is being interpreted as the State government sending out a message to the Central government and pitching the State Election Commission (SEC), an independent agency, against the Election Commission of India (ECI), which insisted that Rahul Gandhi file an affidavit to support his allegations.

"The Cabinet recommends that the State Election Commission prepare the voters' list and hold local bodies elections, including the GBA, with ballot papers. There is an erosion of confidence and credibility among people towards EVMs. The cabinet has decided to make necessary laws by amending the existing Acts," Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil told the media after the cabinet meeting. He said the amended Acts will be placed before the cabinet in 15 days, and then sent for the governor's approval.

Patil defended the move, saying it has evolved from people's opinion, the decline in credibility of EVMs, and complaints of malpractices in the voters' list, especially the inclusion of non-existent voters. P4

MUDA: Desai report gives clean chit to CM

The cabinet on Thursday approved the Justice PN Desai Commission report on alleged irregularities in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority. "The report said there is no evidence against CM Siddaramaiah and his family members," said Law Minister H K Patil | P4

1 Talks with GE for 113 F404 aero engines over, pact to be signed by September-end

2 They are for additional Tejas Mark1As. Govt approved procuring 97 Mk1As in August

3 A couple of LCA MK1s would be delivered to the Indian Air Force in October this year

Another deal for GE engines soon

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

INDIA intends to soon sign a contract with American giant General Electric to procure 113 F404 aero engines for the advanced version of the light combat aircraft (LCA) Tejas Mark1A. The deal is in addition to a previous one for F404s for which supplies are on, though there was some hiccup attributed to supply chain issues.

Sources in the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) said that "negotiations with GE has been completed and the contract will be signed at the end of this month." In August, the Cabinet Committee on Security gave its approval for 97 LCA Mk1A jets to be manufactured by HAL at a cost of around ₹67,000 crore.

Meanwhile, a couple of LCA MK1s would be delivered to the Indian Air Force (IAF) in October this year, another source in the HAL said. "Ten aircraft have already been built and are being tested. The first delivery will take place in October, with one aircraft from Nashik already ready for handover," he said. The Mk1A has completed weapons integration trials, including the firing of Astra and ASRAM missiles.

Besides the F404s, India has already procured 10 F414 engines from GE, sources said. They will be used to develop prototypes of the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) and the Twin Engine Deck Based Fighters (TEDBF) for the Navy.

As for Tejas Mk2, it is scheduled to be rolled out in 2027, while 83 Mk1A fighters are expected by 2029.

The Mk1A is expected to play an important role in mitigating the decrease in combat jets and the overall drop in the combat squadrons.

This month, the MiG 21 squadron (23 Squadron) will be retired, bringing the current count of fighter squadrons below 30. The IAF has a sanctioned strength of 42 combat squadrons. A squadron comprises 16-18 aircraft.

Putin raps Don's colonial tactics against India

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin has sharply criticised US President Donald Trump for employing what he described as "colonial-era" pressure tactics against global powers like India and China.

Speaking to the media in Beijing on Wednesday, where he was attending China's Victory Day parade, Putin took aim at Trump's aggressive economic policies, warning that such an approach undermines diplomacy with sovereign nations.

Vladimir Putin

"Powerful economies" like India and China, with heavy populations, have their domestic political mechanism and laws," Putin said, stressing that these countries are not to be treated as subordinates. "When somebody tells you, they are going to punish you, you have to think about the leadership of those countries, those big countries, which have difficult periods of their history too, will react."

"You have to understand that if one of them shows weakness, his political career will be over, so that influences his behaviour," Putin added.

"The colonial era is over. They have to realise they cannot use this term when speaking with their partners," he said, criticising Trump's approach and his apparent lack of understanding.

Futuristic city in Bidadi to showcase tech, AI

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka government on Thursday announced the Greater Bengaluru Innovation & Tech City (GBIT), which is touted to be India's first Artificial Intelligence (AI) city, in Bidadi, about 30km from Bengaluru. The project, which will be spread across 2,000 acres, will serve as South Bengaluru's Central Business District, and also decongest Bengaluru.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, who unveiled the GBIT logo at a press conference in Bengaluru South district (Ramanagara), said GBIT will be part of the Greater Bengaluru Integrated Township (GBIT) -- "India's first and largest integrated township" -- spread across 9,000 acres.

The proposed city is designed on the Work-Live-Play model, will use artificial intelligence, digital twin technology and smart sensors to manage services like traffic, waste, energy and water. It promises to be zero-carbon, zero-waste and zero-traffic, with clean energy and advanced public transport systems.

With direct links to highways, Metro Phase-3 and Suburban Rail, GBIT is being projected as a city of the future that could ease Bengaluru's growing congestion, while offering a sustainable, technology-driven lifestyle. "This city is expected to create lakhs of new jobs in AI, IT, startups and service sectors, and a 'local first employment policy' will be formulated to give priority to local youth," the DCM explained. Skill centres will be set up by the Greater Bengaluru Development Authority to prepare locals for AI-driven and future-ready industries. This new city will shift a large part of business and employment activities outside Bengaluru," he said.

FARMERS STAGE PROTEST

Hundreds of farmers held a protest at the Deputy Commissioner's office over land acquisition for the proposed township, when DCM Shivakumar was here to unveil the GBIT logo.

Addressing them, the DCM said it has been decided to provide compensation of Rs 1.50 crore to Rs 2.50 crore per acre, based on the criteria of the respective land, and also spoke about giving land to farmers in 50:50 ratio. "Farmers who share their land without getting any money will be given developed land in the ratio of 50:50," he said. P2

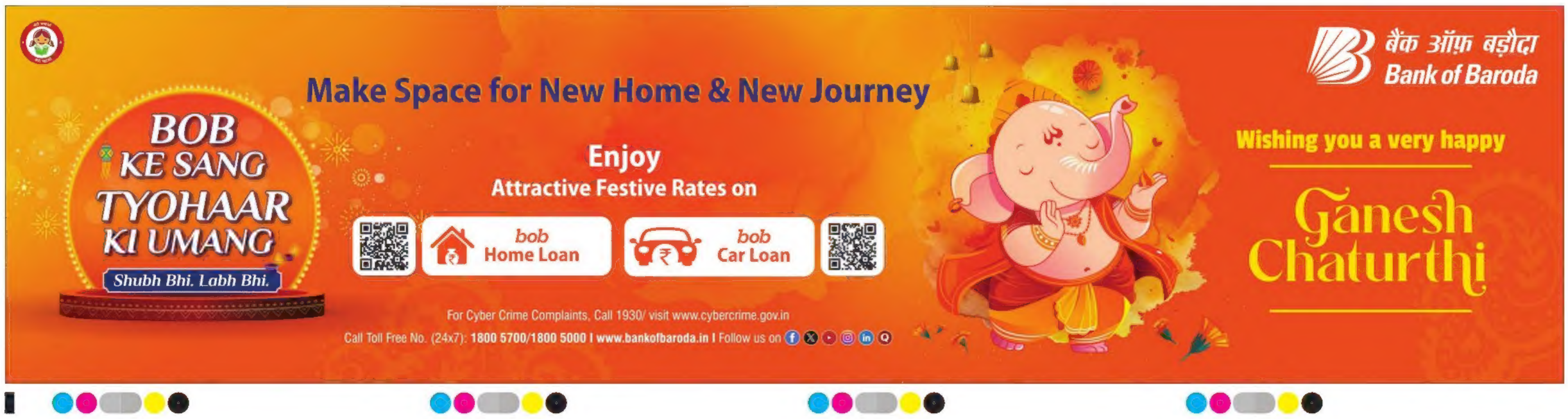
SPECS OF AI CITY

950 acres for lakes, water bodies, green buffers

Zero-carbon, zero-waste, zero-traffic goal

AI-powered monitoring of air, water, energy use

Olympic-standard training, international cricket stadium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